

# Land-Based Healing Toolkit: in service of the vision of Sorrel Leaf Healing Center

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## Community Need Statement

Mental health resources for young people in Humboldt county are scant; at the same time, young people are in great need of these, and at disproportionate rates. In addition, young people, and society at large, suffer from a nature-deficit, climate change, and overstimulation, which this project will target to give space to and offer ways to reconnect. This is the broader context for the specific need this project addresses, which is creating an offering from and a tool for Sorrel Leaf Healing Center in order to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate individuals, groups, and communities, especially young people and their support people.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to the land and the Wiyot people who belong to the land that will host SLHC, this potential for healing. Thanks to the many Indigenous Peoples and nations (Wiyot, Yurok, Karuk, Hupa) of what colonial interests call Humboldt County. Thanks to Sorrel Leaf Healing Center, Beth Anderson, Tayloranne Finch (Growing Together), Evan Buxbaum, the local young people and their support people, my social work cohort and many instructors.

## Method

This project draws on ecotherapy, dialectical behavioral therapy and the Work that Reconnects to inform the writing of a toolkit of interventions that will serve to connect young people and their support people to themselves, the earth, and each other. The project is place-specific, drawing on local ecosystems and seasons. The project will be shared via a newsletter, at the end of SLHC presentations and during outreach to organizations and community partners. The project will also be a resource for the mobile response team and the team at the residential facility. I hope to work for SLHC once it is open and help with the implementation of these interventions, and the development of more of them within the context of its in-house and outreach programs.

## Sorrel Leaf Healing Center Site Plan



## Deliverable/Results

The toolkit will be an open resource available to the community via Sorrel Leaf Healing Center's (SLHC) website, and will be available as an outreach tool for SLHC as they introduce their services and vision to the community at large. The interventions will also be available to Humboldt County young people and their support people as a way to connect with themselves, the earth, and each other. Finally, they will be used at the center once open in 2024.

## Theoretical Issues/Literature

- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) works on the premise that two realities can be held true at the same time. This technique incorporates mindfulness, emotional regulation, distress tolerance, and interpersonal relationship skills.
- Ecotherapy is a model that conceptualizes the integration of nature-based healing as intrinsic to our own and the earth's wellness (Buzzell & Chalquist, 2009).
- These align with Indigenous methodologies in which peoples are conceptualized as none other than land, and vice versa (HSU Native American Studies, 2020).
- Body-based interventions are also at the root, as they connect us to land and land connects us to the body (Eager & Kearns, 2022).
- The Work that Reconnects (Macy & Brown, 2014) interweaves these themes and provides a framework for understanding how to reconnect with earth, self, and other.

## Credibility Statement

My positions as a former youth, anti-adult supremacy activist, parent to a small child, and Buddhist are central to my ability to see how these exercises might be informed by and feed into a tradition of nonviolent communication that will lead children to know themselves, their needs, and their voices. I am mindful of my particular privileges and seek to use them only for the benefit of all, and in particular, for children and all others that belong to disenfranchised communities.

## References

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